

COMITEE: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

QUESTION: Resolving the issue of drug-and-arms-smuggling migrants with emphasis on the US-Mexico border.

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Personal introduction

Dear Delegates, my name is Eleonore de Moratti, I am a 16-year-old student in the Lycée Franco-Héllénique Eugène Delacroix, and I am privileged to be your Vice President in the committee United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, accompanied by my co-chair Melina Belessiotis to navigate you through this year's MUN session. I hope that this study guide helps you enrich and advance your knowledge on these issues, with case studies and key words, in order to be well prepared for a lively and constructive debate.

Debating on global political issues as young delegates in a simulation of the United Nations broadens knowledge, vocabulary and teamwork skills. During these three productive days, you will be in the shoes of a diplomat in the United Nations, representing a country. The MUN allows each delegate to take steps to deepen their

understanding and knowledge by debating, negotiating, researching, communicating, and of course seeing through the eyes of a country by representing it. Debating political issues while representing a country, its opinions and actions, without necessarily personally agreeing with them, allows the refinement of every point of view of an issue. The MUN helps delegates understand how diplomacy and debates work in real-world settings, and simultaneously learn how to stay diplomatic and objective, which is key to having a collaborative and enlightening debate.

Going through the subject of: resolving the issue of drug-and-arms-smuggling migrants with emphasis on the US-Mexico border, to regulating the impact of terrorist groups, paramilitary militias and cartels of drugs in political sectors and finally implementing measures to decrease the numbers of minors entering the criminal world through social media, prior to successful personal research from the delegates and help from the study guides I am positive that the LFHMUN2025 will be full of rich and respectful debates.

Introduction

The issue of drug and arm smuggling migrants in the US-Mexico border has been a critical matter the past years. American weapons are in the hands of Mexican cartels. Since it is almost impossible to get weapons in Mexico, with only one firearm store in the US border, which is at a military base, criminals smuggle them in. After retrieving the firearms, they are given to the criminal groups that pay the smuggler. The southern US-Mexico border, spanning four states and about 26 land ports of entry (POEs), CBP data shows that most illicit drug substances are smuggled through POEs, in areas without fencing, fentanyl, powder cocaine and methamphetamine are the most common drugs smuggled through.

Mexico has been in a drug-war with a cause of the drug cartels' violence which has escalated to human trafficking, murders, debt and kidnappings. The fine for drug smuggling can go up to 5 million dollars, which is why cartels have been ant trafficking and hardly ever get been caught. With the smuggling of illicit drug substances and illegal weapons, both of which issues increase homicide rates, opioid addictions and builds tension between the United States and Mexico. The United Nations could enhance U-S and Mexico's border security with upgrades including reinforcement of surveillance, gun control and frequent drug inspections of belongings, raise awareness in schools and neighborhoods and have stricter international regulations and expand the UNODC campaigns.

Definition of key terms

Illicit drug substance: illegal drug, used produced or trafficked unlawfully.

Drug cartels: criminal groups that control the production and trafficking of illicit drug substances.

Arm cartels: criminal groups that control trades and trafficking firearms illegally.

Smuggling: illegal transportation of goods across borders to evade laws of restriction.

CBP: US Customs Border Protection

POEs: Port of Entry

Human trafficking: illegal trade of people for exploitation

Asylum laws: Allows people to seek protection in another country if they are in danger on their own.

Drug war: Conflict between government and drug cartels.

Opioid: Drug that can be a pain reliever, it is very addictive.

Drug seizures: confiscation of illicit drug substances.

Border security: measures are taken to protect a country's borders.

International regulations: laws that govern countries and organizations across national borders.

ATF: United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearm and Explosives.

Terrorist attack: act done by criminal groups to create fear most of the time with motive of political or religious issues, individuals causing terrorist attack are armed with weapons or explosives.

To conceal: to cover up, hide something

General overview

Drug and arm smuggling migrants are the illegal trafficking of illicit substances and arms, from the U.S into Mexico, often controlled by cartels.

What are cartels?

In the context of Mexico, cartels are criminal organizations that engage in the circulation of drugs, arms and migrants. Mexican cartels are known for the violence they engage in when a sum of money isn't dropped off by a "client", following an exchange of drugs or arms for money (such as the Sinaloa Cartel). Mexican cartels tend to be a menace to vulnerable neighborhoods and are the main cause of the instability in Mexico.

Where are the drugs transported through the U.S - Mexico border coming from?

The illicit drugs transported through the U.S - Mexico border are all originated by different places. The top 5 main drugs transported through these borders are cocaine,

produced by Colombia, marijuana originated by Mexico itself, heroin which comes from Mexican poppy fields, methamphetamine produced in Mexican labs, with its easiness to produce, it's the most seized drug in Americas POE (port of entry) and lastly, fentanyl, the strongest opioid causing the most deaths in the U.S ,contains chemicals from China and it is manufactured in Mexico.

The U.S is a major gun supplier with lax gun laws at the same time, making it easier for individuals and cartels to buy, sell, and smuggle them into Mexico, where in contrast with the U.S have very strict gun laws. There is a very big demand for weapons from cartels, to fight rivals and law enforcement. Border security and controls between Mexico and the United States always patrol by border control, but cartels find other paths to smuggle weapons and drugs using the profits to buy American arms creating drug-for-gun trade, causing empowerment of cartels leading to this issue to worsen within the years

The illegal transportations of illicit substances such as fentanyl, cocaine, heroin and methamphetamine from the borders of the United States into Mexico are controlled by the Mexican cartels, using methods such as using hidden storage places of vehicles, tunnels and drug mules, often this work is done by paid individuals who enter through the ports of entry, the issue of drug smuggling is driven by high drug demand, cartel influence and corruption. In the U.S southern borders are located 26 land ports of entry, CBP point that most illicit substances (fentanyl) are smuggled through the POEs, and that border security is using detection of illicit drug tools anywhere but the POEs such as Integrated Surveillance Towers (IST), tunnel detection programs, heightened presence of Border Patrol agents, and more programmed surveillance technology,

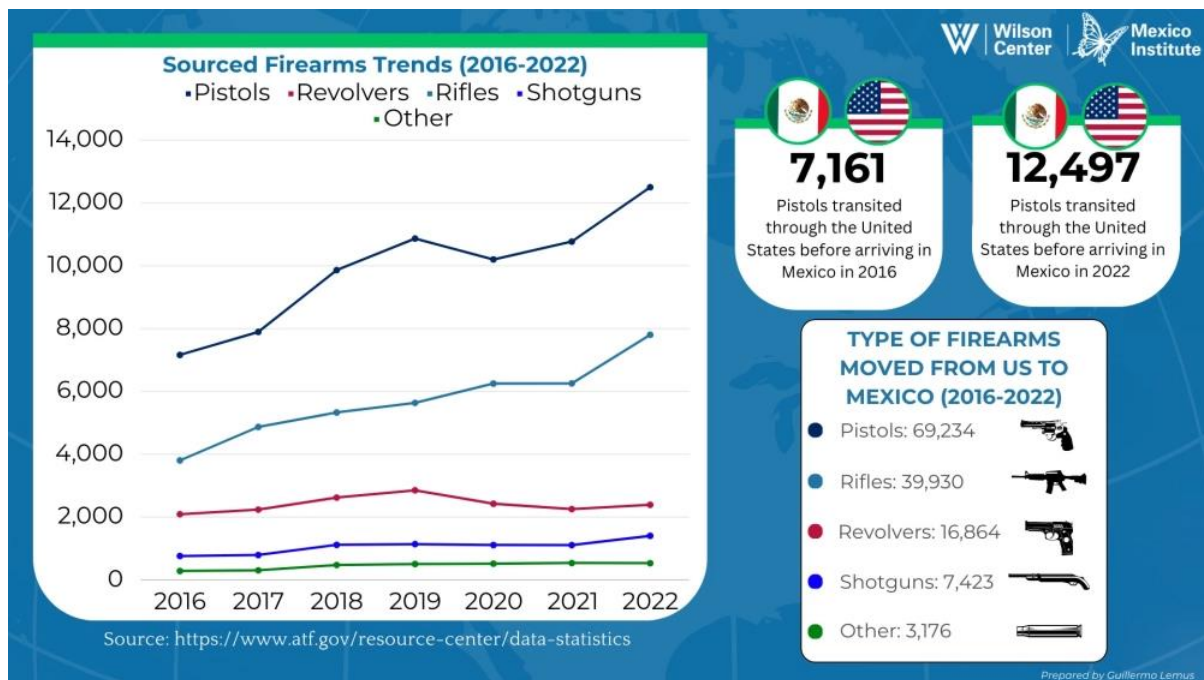
Comparison: Drug Type and Drug Seizures at the Southern Border by Border Patrol and OFO, FYs 2022 and 2023		
Methamphetamine	2022	160,000 lbs.
	2023	121,000 lbs.
Marijuana	2022	85,700 lbs.
	2023	61,200 lbs.
Cocaine	2022	25,200 lbs.
	2023	27,600 lbs.
Fentanyl	2022	14,100 lbs.
	2023	26,700 lbs.
Heroin	2022	1,500 lbs.
	2023	1,200 lbs.
Other Drugs	2022	1,500 lbs.
	2023	2,800 lbs.

This shows that most of the fentanyl seized by CBP is being smuggled through the southern border. In 2022, 14,100 lbs. of fentanyl was seized by the CBP on the southern border. A year later 26,700 were seized, which shows an increase of 89.36%, indicating the strong increase of fentanyl smuggling which has been a major issue in the past years. Fentanyl has been a major issue due to its dangerous impacts, 50 times stronger than heroin (over 100,000 overdose deaths in 2022, U.S). Fentanyl is easy to produce or find but is still in high demand by Mexican cartels due to its lethality.

Illegal arm trafficking through the U.S-Mexico border brings both countries in high danger, and can be a threat to their security, influencing violence in Mexico and U. S's difficulty of preventing criminal activity and efforts of controlling and enforcing border security. The ATF (United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearm and Explosives.) responsible for the enforcement of these laws, makes efforts for the handling of this issue. Once again, Mexican criminal

organizations are mostly controlling weapon smuggling through the borders, primarily focusing on transporting rifles and handguns. Similarly to drug smuggling, the weapons smuggled are hidden in vehicles or through tunnels and are often broken down into smaller parts to be easily transported and concealed. Baja California, is the Mexican state with the most firearms detected back to the United States, interpreting for 31% of all illegal and trafficked firearms in Mexico.

The use and trade of illegal weapons through the U.S-Mexico border worsens Mexico's current instability but could also be a threat to the United States since the weapons can be used on either side of the border. Even though it is said that the United States do not have strict gun laws, it is still a violation of federal laws to be transporting weapons without any permit, such as the Gun Control Act and Arm Export Control Act, though the United States do have more "relaxed" gun laws than Mexico, with their one and only legal gun store in Mexico city, whole bureaucratic processes are necessary to purchase a weapon, which is why Mexican cartels purchase them in the U.S.



An increase of pistols is pointed out by the ATF between the years 2016 to 2022, which have shown to be the weapons mostly used by Mexican cartels due to their ease to be concealed with their small size. The UNODC identifies "ant-trafficking" as a form of cross-border firearm trafficking recognized by the discreet movement of small quantities, typically aimed at meeting localized demand, most cross-border seizures involve fewer than five firearms, supporting the "ant trafficking" system. In February 2025, the United States declared eight Latin American criminal groups as foreign terrorist organizations. This declaration was aimed at pressure these criminal organizations.

Causes

- **Cartel business**

Illegal drug and arm trafficking is a major source of income for Mexican cartels and criminal organizations, making it a profitable business with their organized and highly funded smuggling operations.

Ease of access and vulnerability of border

The weak border security of the United States and gaps in surveillance are an advantage for the criminal organizations and their smugglers. Though the United States have tried to enforce their border security, with new technology such as drones and border patrol agents, which has been slightly ineffective, something that traffickers take advantage of.

- **Cartel violence**

The violence between criminal organizations ongoing in Mexico cartels and government enforcement has led to the instability in Mexico, making it difficult for law enforcement to combat the drug-and-arm smuggling issues going on in the country because of the intimidating violence the criminal organizations use to intimidate the authorities.

Consequences

- **Murders and terrorist attacks**

The increase of illegal firearms in the hands of cartels has led to the rise in violent crimes such as murders, shootings, kidnappings and robberies between rival criminal groups or even local communities, these kinds of acts are in the federal penal code (article 139).

- **Public health crisis**

The smuggled drugs from the U.S into Mexico are mostly opioid drugs such as fentanyl, which is highly addictive and harming, opioid drugs can slow down a person's breathing, decrease blood pressure and is up to 100 times stronger than morphine and can lead to death, even in small amounts. Drug addictions and overdoses have been a serious issue both in Mexico and U.S healthcare systems, needing resources for addiction treatments, rehabilitation and emergency requirements for overdose, all the above necessitate cover of the financial challenges they cause.

- **Social consequences**

The drug trade only serves an economic benefit to criminal organizations and only causes an increase in poverty and inequality to the rest of the community, particularly in rural areas. The jobs given in cartels and general criminal groups put each member in danger and expose them to severe violence, only causing the destruction of the individual's mental well-being. Individuals concerned by the violence of drug cartels can be forced to flee their home, from violent threats to burglary or murder, this causes a rise of displacement, where families or individuals seek safety in Mexico but end up

having to migrate from Mexico into the U.S, also causing a call for a look into the immigration problems of the United States.

- **Diplomatic tension Mexico-U. S**

While both countries equally work to combat the issue of drug and arm smuggling migrants through the borders, disagreements and tension can occur all with trying to handle the issue as the same time, this can pressure the Mexican government leading to complicating its internal politics with its external.

- **Economic decline**

The increased crime rate and reputation of dangerous cartels in certain regions have deeply damaged Mexico's economy, the criminality has severely impacted Mexico by companies refusing to work in some areas after some have been threatened by cartels to pay protection money, tourism decreasing all leading to the decline of economy in Mexico.

- **Border security U.S**

The United States has tried to enforce border security over the years, with new technology, to rising the number of border patrol agents, agencies such as the ATF have put a large amount of effort into attempting to prevent drug and arm smuggling, but no matter the efforts, the trafficking moves places and floods all across the borders, making it difficult to track them or prevent the smuggling on both sides of the border.

Case studies

Case study of Balkan route network

During the peak of the European migrant crisis, in 2015, the Balkan routes that were a corridor for migrants fleeing the middle east, going towards western Europe, also became an easy transit route for drug and weapon smugglers.

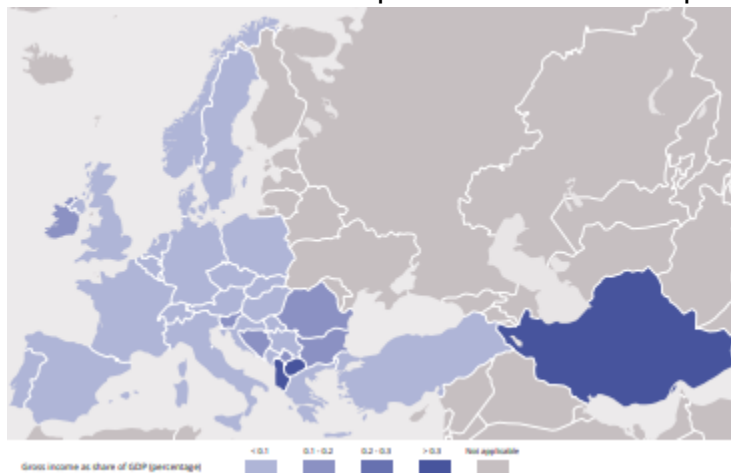
“This study focuses on a vital aspect of illicit drug trafficking: the huge profits that flow from this trade into the hands of criminals and their networks. Southeastern Europe and so-called Balkan route, is a key pathway for the delivery of opiates from Afghanistan into western and central Europe.”

https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Studies/IFF_report_2015_final_web.pdf

Migrants paid between 1,500€ and 5,000€ to be transported across borders, and criminals offered them forged documents and accommodations, though they were being transported with unsafe vehicles, going through dangerous paths as a result many migrants did not survive, for example in 2015, 71 migrants were found dead in a vehicle operated by a smuggling ring.

The Balkan route has been part of the “Heroin highway” transporting opiates from Afghanistan through Iran, Turkey and the Balkans to Western Europe. The drug smugglers took advantage of the chaos and movement of people to blend drug transportation into migrant travelling. In 2016, Serbia, 200kg of heroin was seized, found concealed in a vehicle previously used to transport migrants.

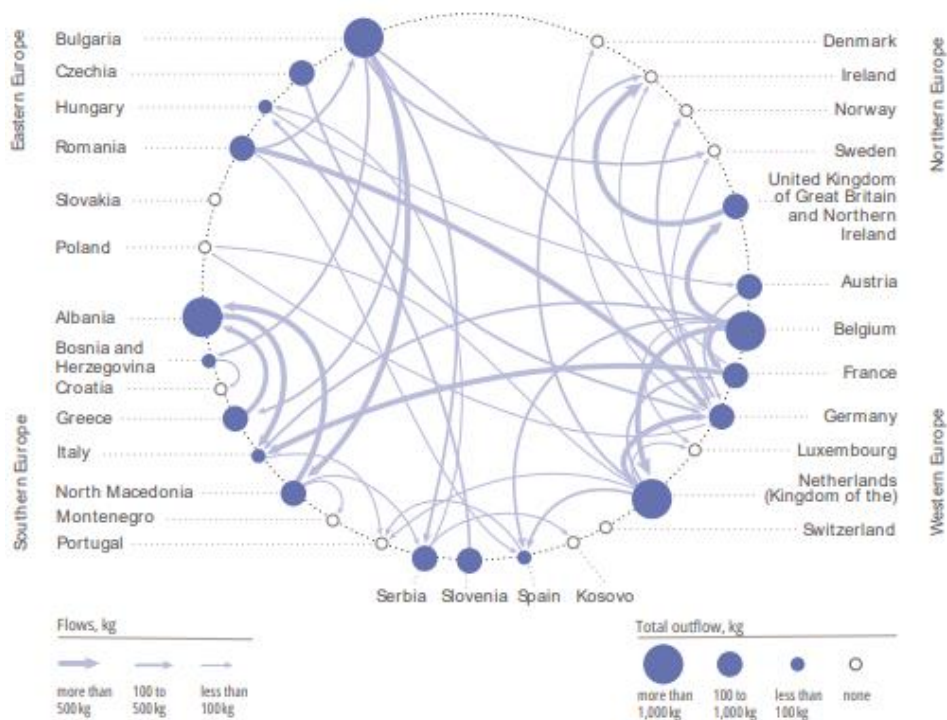
Weapons such as rifles, handguns and ammunition, from western Europe into the middle east and north Africa, often fueling the conflicts the migrants were fleeing. Most of these weapons were originated from the Post Yugoslav black market, by the poorly secured military stockpiles in Bosnia, Serbia and Albania. This increased the crime rate in Europe and public safety concerns.



income from opiate and methamphetamine markets as share of GDP

Major law enforcement Action was put in place in 2017 by border police, Europol and INTERPOL, involving surveilling known smuggling routes, raids on suspected stash locations, and undercover agents. The outcome of the enforcement action included 500kg+ of illicit drugs seized, forged passports and seizures of arms such as pistols, silencers and AK-47 rifles.

Opiate flows on the Balkan route
(kilograms of pure illicit opiates, 2019-2022 average)



The Balkan route is a clear illustration of the issue of drug and arms smuggling migrants with problems like high geopolitical instability, weak border governance, and mass displacement.

Case study on Libya

Since the fall in 2011, Libya has been a central point in transnational criminal networks, where drug trafficking, arm trafficking and smuggling migrants seem to be interconnected due to the vulnerable country's instability which is taken advantage of from the criminal groups.

Migrants pay smugglers, which work with loose alliances, to transport them from Chad, Niger or Sudan, to more coastal cities such as Tripoli from where they get transported with boats to Italy. Some are held back in detention centers where they go through tortures such as forced labor or sold to traffickers.

Weapons from Libya's looted military is trafficked into the Sahel, arming terrorist and criminal organizations, such as Nigeria, Mali and Niger. Militias, tribal networks, and transnational smugglers dominate this trade. Libya has become a central transit point for illegal arm transactions across North Africa, the Sahel and the middle east, these arms such as Kalashnikovs, fund local wars but also secure militias controlling

strategic corridors. Libya's arms have been documented in Malian's insurgency, Boko Haram's arsenal and jihadist groups.



The criminal groups trafficking humans use the illicit weapons to enforce ransom payments and to protect the routes, though the profits made from the transactions of weapons are invested in strengthening warlords and undermining peace efforts. This activity has intensified regional conflicts, enabling criminal groups to gain ground.

Though drug trafficking is less noticeable and more discreet, it is a growing part of the criminal economy in the Sahel corridor, making it a transit hub for Europe. Cannabis resin (Hashish) is produced in Morocco, and it is transported through Algeria and Tunisia to Libya which is often transported alongside with weapons or migrants which is a result of drug traffickers collaborating with human smugglers and arm dealers by sharing routes and transport infrastructure.



Libia's ideal launch point countries for illicit drugs entering the market are Italy, Malta and Southern France, taking advantage of port cities like Misrata that has become a major trafficking point for maritime drug routes.

Drug and arm smuggling in Libya not only sustains conflicts, but also global black market showing how interconnected all these issues are. Leading to various international consequences.

Concerned countries

United-States: The US takes a very active role in controlling drug and arms smuggling as well as migration from Latin American countries. The US works closely with Mexico and the Central American countries in programs such as the Merida initiative to "calm" the cartels and strengthen border security. However, trafficking, as well as migration, continues to be some of the main challenges mostly because criminal networks growing bolder and ongoing destabilization.

Mexico: Mexico is deeply concerned with drug and arms smuggling related to migrants, that go through it as the main transit route into the United States. The government had put in military and police forces and cooperates with the United States, receiving support from programs as the Mérida Initiative. Despite the efforts, violence and trafficking continue to be elevated. Mexico faces competition with powerful cartels that manipulate migration flows and menace Mexico's population.

Colombia: Being one of the world's largest suppliers of cocaine, Colombia faces the problem of drug and arm issue linked to migration. The Colombian government has fought against these cartels involved in illegal activities through military operations, with the U.S. further assisting through programs like Plan Colombia. A few advancements have been noticed, but violence persists, and trafficking networks have changed. Because of Venezuelan migrants making their way over the borders, Colombia now faces other security problems.

Brazil: Drugs and arms smuggling are linked to migrants in Brazil because of its long, border with Colombia, Bolivia, and Venezuela. To stop these crimes, military patrols were increased across the border, and police presence increased in big cities. Being a member of BRICS, Brazil cooperates at various levels with its neighboring countries and other international organizations. However strong criminal groups such as the PCC, through rising violence, threaten peace.

Venezuela: Venezuela, given the concerns it poses in terms of drug and arms trafficking as well as migrant smuggling, has seen the problem from an economic crisis

that has caused thousands of citizens to leave, allowing traffickers to exploit various routes. The government invested in cross border control to bring down some of the anonymous criminal groups. Conditions then started to degrade as armed groups and cartels moved in and stepped up their actions. International assistance to Venezuela has been minimal due to political tensions. Neighboring countries like Colombia and Brazil are indirectly involved as either destination or transit zones.

Honduras: As its one of the main areas of origin for people fleeing from violence and poverty, Honduras is directly linked with drug and arms smuggling as well as the migrants. Criminal organizations are active in trafficking cocaine and weapons using the routes that migrants themselves use to cross the north. The government has engaged in police and military operations against gangs but continues to face corruption and lack of resources. Honduras has benefited from U.S. assistance for security programs, though the results have been mixed. It has mostly worsened, feeding even greater levels of migration.

El Salvador: The smuggling of drugs and weapons to migrants directly affects El Salvador because MS-13 and Barrio 18 gangs transport these items through migration corridors. The government implemented strict security protocols which involve large detention operations and military deployments to reduce gang authority. The United States helps El Salvador through law enforcement training and aid programs. Trafficking networks maintain their presence despite the reduction of violence in particular regions.

Guatemala: Guatemala serves as a central point for drug and arms trafficking as it connects South America and the U.S. into a corridor. The traffickers rely on border regions to transport cocaine and weapons. The government deployed security forces and formed border units and made agreements with the U.S. for increased collaboration and financial support through regional security programs. Extensive corruption plus poverty levels and restricted resources have weakened these measures. Certain areas have seen degrading conditions because cartels have collaborated with local gangs.

Canada: Canada maintains indirect interest in drug and arms smuggling related to migrants because it maintains a border with the U.S. which serves as a primary market. Organized criminal groups utilize Canadian territory to move illegal products between different locations. The government enhanced border security and developed partnerships with American agencies while taking part in global anti-trafficking operations. Canada sustains cooperation with the U.S. through joint task forces and participates in the Cross-Border Crime Forum. The authorities have enhanced their enforcement methods, but the smuggling operations continue to operate.

France: The Mediterranean regions of France endure direct drug and arms smuggling issues because the nation functions as a major European transit point. The government boosted border security and disassembled trafficking networks while collaborating with Europol and Frontex. French authorities have formed alliances with

North African countries to prevent smuggling routes. The situation has worsened areas because these efforts have failed to prevent rising violence in urban centers and ports.

Nigeria: Nigeria is directly concerned to drug and arms smuggling related to migrants as it serves as both a departure and transit location across West Africa. Nigerian ports together with its weak borders that serve as trafficking channels for cocaine and heroin plus weapons that move toward European and North African destinations. The Nigerian government operates through its NDLEA agency along with UN to seize drug shipments and track down traffickers. The detection and arrest of traffickers has become difficult because corruption and armed conflicts are present in the region.

Afghanistan: Afghanistan faces direct consequences from migration related drug and arms trafficking because the country leads global opium production which funds criminal organizations and militant groups. Before the Taliban took power Afghanistan partnered with UN and NATO forces to eliminate drug facilities and stop shipments however ongoing war and limited control stopped their success. Since the Taliban established control international assistance has declined while trafficking networks developed to intensify the situation. Pakistan together with Iran function as secondary transit routes.

Turkey: The nation of Turkey maintains a primary interest in overcoming drug and arms smuggling which involves migrants because it is used as a major passage between Asia and Europe. Refugee traffickers use population movements from Syria, Afghanistan and other war-torn regions to distribute heroin with synthetic drugs and weaponry. The government strengthened border security controls and enhanced patrol operations while working together with Europol and Frontex EU agencies. The European Union provides Turkey with financial support together with technical resources for border control operations and anti-smuggling programs. The current situation remains complex because smuggling routes tend to change their locations. Various European and Middle Eastern nations maintain indirect involvement which shows the need for long-term regional collaboration.

Lebanon: Lebanon faces direct challenges with drug and arms smuggling which connects to migrant movement because it shares its border with Syria while housing more than one million refugees who are exploited by traffickers. Criminal organizations handle drugs including Captagon and transport weapons through border areas which lack necessary controls. The government performs operations to upgrade security but experiences difficulties because of restricted resources together with political instability. Lebanon has assistance from United Nations and European nations to develop security measures, yet enforcement continues to show ineffective results. The economic crisis together with regional conflicts has caused the situation to deteriorate.

Pakistan: Pakistan maintains a direct connection with drug and arms smuggling which links to migrants because as it also shares a border with Afghanistan that produces large quantities of opium. The traffickers move heroin and methamphetamine and illegal weapons through refugee routes and unpopulated regions to reach Iran and

other locations. The government has enhanced its border security with more fencing and put in place various anti-narcotics measures while establishing partnerships with the United Nations and regional countries to break down trafficking networks. The government's interventions have not resulted in outcomes because certain areas continue to experience even worsening conditions from ongoing conflict and economic deprivation.

Syria: The issue of drug and arms smuggling in Syria is a direct concern due to the impact of years of civil conflict that have transformed the nation into a focal point for illicit trafficking operations involving migrants. Arm groups and criminal syndicates are involved in the production and distribution of drugs such as Captagon while also engaging in the trafficking of weapons across borders. The government's ability to maintain control over its territory is limited as rivals often benefit from these activities. International sanctions have been imposed on Syria of offering direct aid which has further compromised law enforcement efforts. The ongoing instability has exacerbated the situation in the region. Neighboring nations like Lebanon and Jordan play a role as transit and destinations in the trafficking world while involving Turkey.

Mali: Mali the problem revolves around the movement of drugs and weapons along migrant pathways due to the disputes in the northern areas creating a shelter for criminals engaging in illicit trafficking. Criminal networks exploit the routes utilized by migrants through the Sahel region to traffic cocaine, marijuana and firearms towards North Africa and Europe. Despite efforts supported by UN and EU missions to boost border security and prevent smuggling activities, progress has faced obstacles due to limited resources and ongoing violence. Extremist organizations have made things more complex by capitalizing on these actions.

Central African Republic: Because of the lack of control over its borders with nations like Sudan and DRC, the Central African Republic (CAR) continues to be a major transit point for drugs and small arms such as pistols. Weak governance and internal conflict only make the issue worse. Very little force has been used, despite international efforts by MINUSCA, France, and the EU. Efforts to stop smuggling and manage migration are made more difficult by Russia's expanding influence through the Wagner Group.

Italy: The issue of drugs and arms smuggling related to migrants is directly concerning for Italy, as traffickers use routes over the Mediterranean to carry cocaine, heroin, and weapons. The government has increased naval patrolling, fortified the northern borders, and worked together with Europol and Frontex. Under the EU support, and through agreements with countries in North Africa, Italy, however, is still under pressure, and routes are starting to change. The other European states are from a distal point of origin for being considered as places of destination for traffickers, so then are requiring constant regional coordination and patrolling

United Kingdom: Directly concerning drugs and arm trafficking in connection with the migration are criminal networks systematically exploiting irregular migration routes to

traffic cocaine, heroin, or illegal arms into Europe. These threats had caused governments to step up border checks, enhance cooperation with Europol, and divert funds to disrupt supply chains in source countries. Together with France and Belgium, the UK has taken the initiative of dismantling smuggling groups running on the Channel. Seizures and arrests have always remained high, thus revealing the persistence of the problem despite the measures. Other European countries are indirectly affected as transit points, placing emphasis on the need for joint action throughout the continent to reduce trafficking and secure borders.

Europol: focuses closely on combatting the trafficking of drugs and weapons linked to migrants and assists European Union nations in monitoring groups that take advantage of migration pathways. They collaborate in intelligence sharing and joint operations across borders alongside Frontex and Interpol. Support from the EU Europol has made significant busts; however, the issue endures due to unrest and impoverishment in transit regions. Additional countries from Europe and North Africa play roles making collaborative endeavors crucial for progress.

Interpol: plays a role in fighting the illegal trafficking of drugs and weapons associated with migrants by promoting international police collaboration efforts to combat this illicit activity effectively. The organization facilitates the exchange of intelligence between member nations, assists in coordinating border investigations and issues alerts concerning traffickers. Interpol partners with entities such as Europol and the UNODC to assist in dismantling smuggling networks. Though Interpol does not receive financial support from any single country, it depends on cooperation among its 195 member states for resources. The situation remains complex due to conflicts and dynamic trafficking routes necessitating continuous global cooperation efforts.

ECOWAS: plays a role in addressing drug and arms trafficking associated with migrants in West Africa by encouraging collaboration among member states through intelligence sharing and joint operations aimed at enhancing border security in the region with the support of organizations such as the UNODC and Interpol despite persistent challenges posed by poverty and instability necessitating continued cooperation efforts.

Un Involvement

UN Security Council, Resolution 2312 (2016)

The Resolution 2312 (2016) aimed to confront migrant smuggling and linked crimes off Libya by allowing people to "inspect and seize" used for smuggling. The Security Council emphasized that these activities "undermine further the process of stabilization of Libya" and "fuel transnational organized crime." The resolution called out all states to "cooperate with relevant international organizations" and to ensure actions are carried out under "international human rights law, and refugee law." This led to naval missions under the auspices of the European Union intercepting boats while the smugglers adjusted very quickly to land.

UN Security Council Resolution 2195 (2014)

The incident was initiated with the intervention of the UN in arms and drug smuggling connected to migration through Security Council Resolution 2195 (2014), which states that “transnational organized crime, including illicit trafficking in arms, drugs, and natural resources,” manifests a threat to international peace and security. This resolution called upon all Member States to “strengthen border management capacity” and “enhance regional and international cooperation” to stop criminal flows that take advantage of porous borders. Plus, it also requested the UN Office on Drugs and Crime to “support efforts to build capacity to investigate and prosecute” those involved. This resolution then laid the ground for further coordination in the disruption of trafficking networks that profit from conflict and migration.

Security Council, Resolution 2462 (2019)

Resolution 2462 (2019) deals with the financing of terrorism and its association with drug and arms smuggling networks exploiting migration pathways. The Security Council “condemns the use of the proceeds of crime, including drug trafficking and arms smuggling, to finance terrorism.” It demands all states to “enhance measures to prevent and combat the financing of terrorism” through improved “international cooperation and exchange of information.” This resolution underlines the association between smuggling and terrorist financing and calls for joint action in closing the funding channels, to break criminal networks engaged in migrant smuggling.

UNODC

A key aid in the efforts to slow down or completely stop drug and arms smuggling has been the UNODC's capacity-building programs. Providing support to countries affected by migration flows, UNODC has mounted several actions, such as training law enforcement and border officials to detect and investigate smuggling networks. The Regional Program for West Africa and the Sahel targets improving criminal justice responses to trafficking in persons and illicit trafficking in drugs and arms, thereby assisting countries in strengthening their legal frameworks and enhancing cross-border cooperation. This sort of practical support can contribute to dismantling smuggling syndicates that ‘prey’ on migrants.

Latest developments

In the past eight years there has been a growing global issue with the smuggling of drugs and weapons involving migrants. Criminal groups have taken advantage of migration flows resulting in a rise in illicit trafficking across borders. To combat this problem nations and international organizations have ramped up collaboration efforts. Initiated coordinated actions to dismantle these illicit operations.

2016: In October of 2016 Resolution 2312 was passed by the UN Security Council allowing member states to seize ships believed to be involved in trafficking and migrant smuggling off the coast of Libya. The resolution highlighted worries about

organizations combining migrant smuggling with arms and drug trafficking providing legal support for naval actions, on an international level.

2017: A major incident that caught attention occurred in 2017 and had a widespread impact worldwide. An initiative led by Europol called Operation Riptide effectively targeted a group engaged in smuggling migrants as well as drugs and weapons across Europe with the cooperation of law enforcement agencies, from Italy, Germany, Austria and Hungary leading to arrests and seizing illegal weapons and drug deliveries. This operation made headlines highlighting how criminal organizations exploit routes by expanding their operations to multiple countries.

2018: In 2018 the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) published a report indicating that human smugglers were more frequently going through routes for trafficking drugs and weapons particularly in North Africa and the Mediterranean region. The report emphasized how criminal organizations were making profits from illegal activities along these routes.

2019: In July of 2019 Europol led an operation called Bosphorus that focused on a group transporting weapons, drugs and illegal immigrants from Turkey into Western Europe. Law enforcement agencies from eight nations took part in the operation, leading to arrests and the seizures of firearms, vehicles and forged documents.

The incident received attention in European media and emphasized the fact that identical criminal groups were benefitting from trafficking individuals as well, as drugs and weapons across borders.

2020: In 2020 Europol and Spanish officials initiated Operation Valkiria dismantling a network that trafficked migrants, amounts of marijuana and weapons from North Africa to Spain. Then 100 migrants were moved in perilous circumstances, alongside drug deliveries. The operation led to arrests and the seizure of firearms and boats. Reports circulated about how criminal organizations took advantage of the border disruptions during the pandemic to increase their activities, such, as smuggling drugs and weapons along migrant pathways.

2021: Europol and the Spanish Guardia Civil collaborated on Operation Limón, which aimed to dismantle a network involved in trafficking cocaine, firearms and migrants from South America and North Africa into Europe. The group used shipping containers and speedboats to transport substances and weapons, in addition, to migrants. Law enforcement detained than 20 individuals and confiscated large amounts of cocaine and firearms.

2022: Frontex coordination efforts in the "South East Europe" Joint Action Day with Europol and INTERPOL focused on dismantling groups involved in trafficking migrants, narcotics and firearms through Balkan pathways. The joint operation resulted in the tracking of 382 individuals, the confiscation of over 100 firearms and large quantities of heroin and cocaine.

2023: Europol collaborated with Frontex, INTERPOL and 26 nations to conduct Joint Action Days focusing on combating migrant smuggling, drug trafficking and arms trafficking along the Balkan routes. This resulted in 566 arrests the confiscation of more than 300 firearms, almost a ton of drugs like cocaine and cannabis as well as the discovery of forged documents.

2024: Frontex spearheaded Operation JAD Danube 9 with 17 other nations to combat activities such as smuggling, arms trafficking and document fraud. The operation led to the arrest of 172 individuals and the confiscation of 278 firearms, a few rounds of bullets and more than 120 forged documents. This event was publicized as a setback for organized crime operating along migration pathways.

Previous attempts to solve the issue

(GI-TOC): The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC) is actively addressing the connections among smuggling activities and the trafficking of drugs and arms by publishing studies that underline the functioning of these illicit networks across Africa and the Mediterranean region. Moreover GI-TOC supports non-governmental organizations in protecting migrants, strengthening community immunity and decreasing dependency on illicit smuggling groups.

INTERSOS and the Mixed Migration Centre: have collaborated to observe the exploitation of migrants by networks smuggling drugs and weapons along their journey through North Africa. They offer support to those affected by this exploitation while gathering information about trafficking routes and criminal groups, offering suggestions to governments and UN agencies for enhancing protection and enforcement of laws.

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF): An organization known for its rescue operations in the Mediterranean Sea region has been aiding migrants stranded along smuggling paths frequently utilized for drug and weapons trafficking activities. In addition to helping those in need of help, **MSB** has also recorded violations by illegal cartels and has collaborated with the United Nations and European Union by sharing detailed reports to support enhanced safeguards and responsibility measures.

Save the Children: has taken initiatives along migration paths in Libya and Niger to safeguard migrants, from individuals involved in trafficking substances and weaponry. They offer refuge facilities and legal assistance while collaborating with community leaders to identify setups and educate officials on enhancing their responses to smuggling activities.

Possible solutions

Enhance collaboration: Enhance collaboration through establishing a collaborative unit that exchanges information concerning smuggling paths and organizes efforts to stop the trafficking of drugs and weapons as well as trafficked migrants. This might

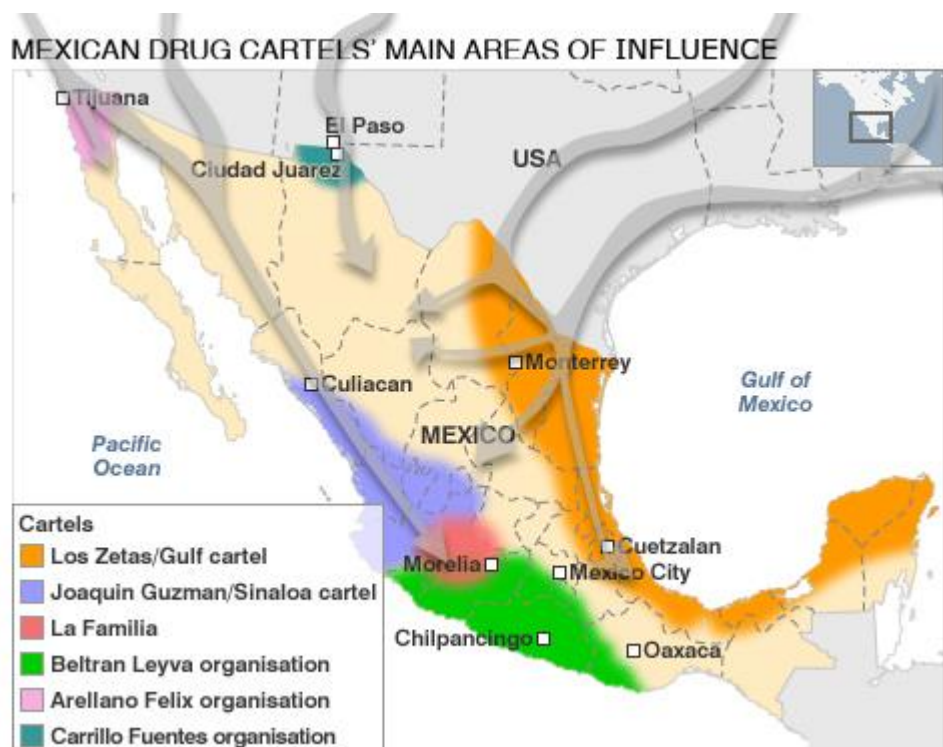
involve investing in scanning technology at borders, bothering and dismantling organized criminal activities. In addition, safe and legal paths for migration along with shelters being available to reduce migrants' reliance on smugglers.

Education: Education is crucial in the prevention of drug and weapons trafficking linked to migration. A deep focus on educating communities at risk can deepen individuals' awareness of the threat caused by illicit networks. Initiatives such as the UNODCs Education, programs that equip youth with skills and knowledge have the potential to susceptibility to exploitation by smugglers and criminal organizations.

Enhancing financial flow monitoring: systems connected to smuggling activities is a further solution. Under stricter anti-money laundering laws and when required to report suspicious transactions, authorities can track down and stop the proceeds used in drug and arms trafficking. This sort of destruction of the financial capacity of criminal networks makes it difficult for them to operate and continue.

Strengthening of regional agreements: to combat drug or arms smuggling. Each of the neighboring countries may sign protocols, then agreeing to real-time data sharing, coordinating border controls, and joint patrols. With regional cooperation, it becomes harder for smugglers to take advantage of migrant circulation to circulate illicit substances and weapons.

Annex



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